

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed April 19, 2006, claims 1-26 are pending and stand rejected. Applicants have thoroughly reviewed the Office Action including the Examiner's remarks and the references cited therein. The following remarks are believed to be fully responsive to the Office Action.

Claims 1, 20, and 24 are amended to clarify the invention. Support for the amendment can be found, for example, at paragraphs [0020], [0021], and [0030] of the specification. Claims 17 and 19 have been cancelled. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the subject matter of these claims in this or another application. No claim has been added. All the claims are believed to be patentable over the cited references.

DRAWINGS

Claim 17 has been cancelled. Thus, Applicants submit that the issue with drawings relating to claim 17 is moot.

CLAIM REJECTIONS – 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 17 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. Claims 17 and 19 have been cancelled. Thus, Applicants submit that the rejection to these claims are moot.

CLAIM REJECTIONS – 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-16, 18, and 20-26

Claims 1-16, 18, and 20-26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,581,694 to Golner *et al.* (Golner). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The Examiner bears the initial burden of factually supporting any *prima facie* conclusion of obviousness. *MPEP* §2142. To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, three criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, to modify the references or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art must teach all the claim limitations. *Id.*

Applicants respectfully submit that Golner does not teach all the claim limitations. Claim 1 recites a gas remover comprising, in part, “a **sight glass** on the load tap changer to permit examination of the inside of the load tap changer, wherein **the load tap changer contains mineral oil**; and an orifice configured to establish a substantially continuous outflow rate of nonreactive gas **to expel vapor phase contaminants from an ullage** in the load tap changer to the atmosphere.” Claim 20 recites, in part, “**means for monitoring** the condition inside the load tap changer, wherein **the load tap changer contains mineral oil**; and **means for expelling vapor phase contaminants from the ullage in the load tap changer** by establishing a substantially continuous outflow of nitrogen.” Claim 24 recites, “**monitoring the condition** inside the load tap changer, wherein **the load tap changer contains mineral oil**; and **expelling vapor phase contaminants from the ullage in the load tap changer** by establishing a substantially continuous outflow of nitrogen.”

Golner teaches a method and system by supplying nitrogen to the ullage above an oil volume in an electrical power handling equipment, such as a power transformer. See Col 1, lines 54-57. In Golner's system, the power transformer 14 may also have a load tap changer 24 for the purpose of switching the electrical power among various taps of the transformer windings. See Col. 3, lines 1- 3. Furthermore, the system is capable of delivering nitrogen to ullage 18 of power transformer 14, control box 20, conservator 22 and to load tap changer 24. See Col. 3, lines 4-7.

The Examiner states that Golner teaches a pressure relief valve 26 associated with the transformer is useful for the purpose of relieving excess pressure in the transformer. Col. 4, lines 30-36. Although the Examiner is correct in this aspect, it is respectfully noted that the Examiner missed the intended purpose of Golner's pressure relief valve 26 - "**Should** the pressure exceed 2.0 psi, bleed valve 26 is set to vent or bleed nitrogen to atmosphere until the pressure drops below 2.0 psi." Col. 4, lines 31-33. Furthermore, the sentence immediately precede this sentence reveals the reason behind the change of pressure - "[t]he pressure in ullage 18 changes due to oil temperature changes caused by transformer loading changes or to changes in ambient temperature, rain or snow caused by weather changes." Col. 4, lines 28-31. Therefore, the pressure relief valve 26 is activated only when the pressure in ullage 18 exceed 2.0 psi. When the pressure is below 2.0 psi, the pressure relief valve is dormant.

Furthermore, it is respectfully noted that Golner's ullage is in the power transformer 14, whereas in the present invention, the ullage is inside the load tap changer 10. In addition, Golner teaches a "system that controls nitrogen pressure in the ullage of a power transformer" (see Golner, Abstract), whereas in the present invention, a substantially continuous supply of nonreactive gas is used to purge/remove contaminants from the ullage. (See Specification

Abstract). Lastly, Golner does not teach or suggest the use of sight glass to monitor the mineral oil condition of the load tap changer.

As shown above, Golner does not teach all the elements of the claimed invention. Golner does not teach or suggest, at least, *inter alia*, a gas remover having “a sight glass on the load tap changer to permit examination of the inside of the load tap changer, wherein the load tap changer contains mineral oil; and an orifice configured to establish a substantially continuous outflow rate of nonreactive gas to expel vapor phase contaminants from an ullage in the load tap changer to the atmosphere,” as recited in claim 1. Furthermore, Golner does not teach or suggest, at least, *inter alia*, a gas remover having, “means for monitoring the condition inside the load tap changer, wherein the load tap changer contains mineral oil; and means for expelling vapor phase contaminants from the ullage in the load tap changer by establishing a substantially continuous outflow of nitrogen,” as recited in claim 20. In addition, Golner does not teach or suggest, at least, *inter alia*, a gas remover having, “monitoring the condition inside the load tap changer, wherein the load tap changer contains mineral oil; and expelling vapor phase contaminants from the ullage in the load tap changer by establishing a substantially continuous outflow of nitrogen,” as recited in claim 24.

Claims 2-16 and 18 depend from independent claim 1, claims 19-23 depend from independent claim 20, and claims 25-26 depend from independent claim 24, and are believed to be patentable over the cited prior art for at least the same reasons as are independent claims 1, 20, and 24. Therefore, these claims are also allowable for at least the foregoing reasons. In light of the amendment submitted herewith, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection to claims 1-16, 18, and 20-26 be withdrawn.

Claim 17

Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Golner in view of U.S. 5,809,976 to Cook et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Claim 17 has been cancelled. Thus, the rejection to claim 17 is moot.

Claim 19

Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Golner in view of U.S. 5,619,121 to Trainor et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Claim 19 has been cancelled. Thus, the rejection to claim 19 is moot.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. If it is believed that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney to expedite the prosecution of the application.

Docket No. 87304.1980
Application No.: 10/697,950
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PATENT

In the event this paper is not timely filed, Applicants petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fee deficiencies or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-2036 with reference to Attorney Docket No. 87304.1980.

Respectfully submitted,

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